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THE WORLD.

A one Act Drama of to-day

by

Mrs. Iver. Levinsohn.

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Mildred Slawson.

Walter Slawson.

Mrs. Wilson.

Agnes, the Maid.

The World.

Scene: Library in Slawson's home. Mrs. S. is lying on the couch. near gas-log fire. She is fast asleep, although it is almost noon. Enter Agnes, the maid. Sees Mistress is asleep. Takes wrap, covers her, then goes to window. Draws the shades: the room is now quite dark. The burning logs throw their rays upon the sleeping figure. Agnes walks to the door on tip-toes, As she is about to open door

Agnes

That sleep is a God Send. I'll see that no one wakes. Exit Agnes.
Silence for a few moments. ~~Then Mrs. S. in her~~ Then Mrs. S. in her sleep

Mrs. S.

cries out: I will, I will save him. Don't for God's sake, don't. She wakes with a start. Sits up quickly, rubs her eyes. I was dreaming. She passes her hand across her brow, and shudders. Dreaming, that which I fear will come true. A pause. Then in tones of horror: If, if it should prove true. She shudders. No, no, it mustn't, it mustn't. She looks about the room terrified, then rises quickly. Rings bal for maid.
Enter Agnes.

Agnes

surprised: Awake already? I was in hope that you would get some little sleep.

Mrs. S.

looking about her as if there were something in the room she feared: Pull up the shades, Agnes. Agnes does so.

Mrs. S.

trembling: Open a window, it's stifling here.

Agnes

opens window, looks at Mistress: What's the matter? Mrs. Slawson?

Mrs. S.

I-I had a horrible dream.

Agnes

tell me what it was, then perhaps you'll feel better.

Mrs. D.

I dreamt I saw Mr. Crager sitting in the electric chair. A great big fellow was pulling the straps around him. His face was covered with somwthing black. I stood there watching him, until the last strap was buckled. I wanted to cry out, but something covered my mouth so that I could not uter a word. I saw the priest comming near him, then I began to battle with all my might . I must speak, I said to myself. So I pulled, I don't know what it was, from my face, and cried out, "He is innocent, he is innocent." "Then why don't you prove it"someone said. "I will, I will save him", I cried, and as I was about to speak an unseen hand was placed upon my shoulder. I was led away, not allowed to tell the truth. Mrs. S. Stands looking at Agnes, as if still dreaming. Agnes goes over to her.

Agnes

Do you know what that is Mrs. Slawson? Your distrubed mind. All that you are constantly picturing came to you in your dream. I am sure it is nothing more. Don't be so alarmed. Mr. Crager is sure to go free, it can't be otherwise. He is innocent, and you and I know it. Y

Mrs. S.

Yes, we know it, and we are the only ones that know it, yet how can we hel help him? We dare not speak. Oh, Agnes, this suspense is killing me. I cannot stand it any longer. Agnes leads her to a chair. She sits down.

Agnes

It won't be long to wait now; the news will come at any moment. It was very sensible of you not to go to court to hear the verdict., for then people would soon see he is more than a friend.

Mrs. S.

rises: angrily cries: People, people, for people I must sacrifice the man I love. If he is convicted it is not by judge and jury, for they don't know the truth, I-I alone condemn him to death because I am afraid of people.

Agnes

It is not altogether on account of people. You have taken an oath at Mr. Crager's request that you would speak.

Mrs. S.

Yes, yes. He will die to protect my name. Oh, my God. Is there no way.

Agnes

There is still hope. His Mother is hopeful, why not you?

Mrs. S.

stopes to listen: sh! Agnes, someone opened the front door. Run and see who it is.

Agnes

runs to door opens it looks out, then in surprised tone: It is Mr. Slawson. She turns to Mrs. S. Now you must be careful.
Exit Agnes.

Mrs. S.

What could have brought him. I didn't expet him for another wek.
Enter Mr. Slawson. Looks at hiErwife in astonishment.
Mildred, I can't believe my own eyes!

Mrs. S.

Why what do you mean?

Mr. S.

The letter told me you were very ill, and it would be best for me to come home at once.

Mrs. S.

astonised: Who-who wrote to you?

Mr. S.

Your mother.

Mrs. S.

at once understands . Dear Mother. She was here the other day, and I had a headache, so I suppose she thought I was very ill. She forces a laugh.

Mr. S.

Well, I am glad I am home, just the same. He looks up suddenly. He is just reminded. Why, Mildred, I forgot to kiss you when I came in I was so surprised and so glad to see you well, I forgot. He opens

his arms; she goes into them. He kisses her tenderly, holding her tightly
I am glad you had that headache, dear. A pause. He takes her hand.
I don't think you are quite well after all.

Mrs. S.

As he releases her, What makes you think I'm not well?

Mr. S.

Your hands are as cold as ice. Come, sit near the fire for a little while.

Mrs. S.

sits on sofa near fire. How did you find business?

Mr. S.

Pretty good. I can't complain, although I would have done much better had I stayed another week as I expected to do.

Mrs. S.

It's too bad Mother wrote.

Mr. S.

Then you're not glad----e

Mrs. S.

interrupting: Yes, of course I'm glad you came, but then your coming interfered with your business, and as a rule, business comes first.

Mr. S.

To others, perhpps, but not to me. You-you are fiert in everything. Money would be nothing to me without you to share it.

Mrs. S.

turns her head from her husband. Do you know dear, I almost wish you wouldn't love me so much?

Mr. S.

You wish I din't love youso Much.

Mrs. S.

Interrupts, Oh, yes, yes, I love you a whole lot, but not as much as you say you love me, and I am glad I do not, for I would never be at ease. I would be jealous the same that you are, and without cause.

Mr. S.

What makes you think I'm jealous?

Mrs. S.

Why you're even jealous of my maid, because I'm kind to her.

Mr. S.

I'm not jealous of your maid. I simply remarked before I left that Agnes is over-fond of you, and I like servents kept in their place. You know Englishmen consider servents necessary evils, not companions, and I am an Englishman, born and bred.

Mrs. S.

Yes, and I know that we Americans are taught not to be too polite to the man with the high hat, or the lady with the smart gown, but to be civil to everyone, including, but to come back to your remark. Agnes knows, I've been deeply interested in Mr. Crager's case, and so every thing she hears about it she brings to me. That is no crime, is it?

Mr. S.

By the way, that fellow, hasn't been convicted yet, has he.

Mrs. S.

frowns: No.

Mr. S.

The law will make a mistake if he is set free.

Mrs. S?
trying to suppress her agitation: What makes youthink that ----
Mr. S.
What makes me think. Why, it's as clear as can be. I followed the case carefully. First, because I knew of your aqquaintance with the family, second, it was a very interesting case.
Mrs. S.
beside herself with anguish, which she tries to conceal. Well/ well, tell me what gives you cause to believe he is guilty.
Mr. S.
Nothing can be plainer, than the story itself. First of all, he is a thief. He robbed the bank.
Mrs. S.
cries out sharply: It isn't true I tell you, It isn't true.
MrS?
How do you know it isn't true.
Mrs. S.
tries to cover her mistake: Why, I know, I know. You know I know the family. I've visited them since you were gone.
Mr. S.
Indeed, I din't know you knew them well enough to call on them.
Mrs. S.
Know, know, I-I didn't. But since that happened, I mean since Mr. Crager's arrest. They told me all about it. Mr. Crager did not steal the money. He loaned it to an old friend, who threatened to kill himself, unless Mr. Crager would loan him the money. He promised to return the money ina week, but when the week was over his friend was penniless, so he killed himself, leaving maurice, I mean Mr. Crager, to face all the charges.
Mr. S.
He was a thief just the same. He did not give his friend his money. He gave him money that belonged to others, but we'll le tit go at that, and come to the more serious crime, when he found prison staring him in the face he went to his step father for the money. A quarrel followed, when he refused him, and the servents hear him say, "You'll pay for this. You can spare my mother both pain and disgrace, but you refuse. You think more of your money than you do of your wife". With this threat he left the room. At three in the morning, the old man was found strangled. Money was scattered all over the room, and in Mr. Crager's room, behind a picture, was found something like two thousand Dollars.
Mrs. S. Tries to interrupt, but Mrs. Puts up his Hand.
But Mr. Crager was not there. His bed was disturbed. He had been lying in it no doubt until he had decided to kill the old man. When asked where he had been hwe would not tell.
Mrs. S.
thwough his entire speach stands terrorstricken, and when Mr. S says, "He would not tell" she staggers.
Mr. S.
You seem to suffer a great deal for so slight an acquaintance.
Mrs. S.
I know he is innocent.
Mr. S.
Laughs sarcastica ly: You know he is innocent. I told you why I think

he is guilty, now why not tell me why you think he is innocent?

Mrs. S.

Because-because---I--I--I don't know why, except that his mother told me she knows he is innocent, and I believe.her.

Mr. S.

Are y9u foolish enough to think his mother knows the truth? or if she does, she will tell it to you?

Mrs. S.

Yes. She trembles from head to foot, as she stops to think a moment. Sees she can go no further, then in a low tone: Perhaps you're right. She wouldn't tell me if she knew, but I know that he is innocent, and if they convict him, it will be murders

Mr. S.

looking steadily at his wife: Mildred, you love this man.

Mrs. S.

starts as if from a blow, stammers: How-how dare you!

Mr. S.

Why, your eyes speak what your lips try to hide. Do you think I am blind? I suppose you wer in love with him the night we met him at your friend's home. Ever since then I have watched you carefully. I received no letter from your Mother. Iwanted to be home in time to see what affect the verdict of gm his guilt would have upon you.

Mrs. S.

How-how do you know it would be guilty?

Mr. S.

The world is confident of his confiction.

Mrs. S.

You mean you are trying to represent the world.

Mr. S.

No, I am willing to stake every dollar I possess that the verdict will be guilty in the fisst degree.

Mrs. S.

staggers.

Mr. S.

looks at her. You do not love him. Your attitude at this moment shows you do not love him.

Mrs. S.

using all her will-ppower:I do not------

Mr. S.

shouts: Do not say the rest. At least have the decency not to lie. He goes to her. Takes her hand. Tell me the truth.

Mrs. S.

on the verge of madness:, You are so sure he will be convicted?

Mr. S.

As sure as my name is Slawson.

Mrs. S.

Pulls her hand from him. Then I don't care what you think: I don't care what you do.

Mr. S.

That means that you love him?

Mrs. S.

Yes, yes, yes. I love him.

I have lovôd him since we were childre n at school. I married you because you were rich at that time. He was poor. His mother was not not married to Mr. Fredriks.

Mr. S.

stands looking at her to horrified to speak. She stops and looks and him.

Mrs. S.

Hand Well, why, why don't you do the usual thing?

Mr. S.

You mean to kill you?

Mrs. S.

Yes.

Mr. S.

That would be foolish. I prefer that you should live. You must hear the news boys shouting Crager is guilty of murder in the first degree, and then when that day comes when he will answer to God and to justice for his crime, that day you will feel as I do now. He grabs his hat rushes out of the room.

Mrs. S. Stands as she is for a few momants.

Mrs. S.

I've ruined two men's lives. One will no doubt die in the elctric chair, the other will die by his own hand. Oh, God why do you creat such cowards as I? Bell rings. That may be someone from Fredricks. She runs to door. Comesface to face with her Mother. Mother, Mother, you have any news?

Mrs. W.

No, not yet. Belive me, dear, I am as ancious as you are.

Mrs. S.

Have you beenthere?

Mrs. W.

Yes, I was there last night. Mrs. Frederick seemed somewaht hopeful.

Mrs. S.

Yes, I know. She has a mother's never dying hope.

Mrs. W.

Now, Mildred. We're alone. You know he's guilty.

Mrs. S.

with difficulty: and you know he is. You think I believe you are anxious for his acqui tal.

Mrs. W.

shocked: Mildred, do you forget you are talking to your Mother?

Mrs. S.

Yes, I now you are not accustomed to hear me speak like that to you, but think stop and think, and then tell me if you blame me.

Mrs. W.

Your husband is a prize and you know it.

Mrs. S.

He is a proze, to a woman who could love him, but you had no business to expect that I could love twice.

Mrs. W.

That is rot. You have a good, noble, and obove all rich husband. No wish of your need go ungratified. My on ly wish is that your sisters do as well as you did, and very likay they will, for you have placed them in society.

Mrs. S.

You mean that now that I have bought them a place in society, but I am

afraid your plan has failed.

Mrs. W.

What do you mean?

Mrs. S.

Walter know the truth.

Mrs. W.

Knows what truth.

Mrs. S. S.

That I love maurice.

Mrs. W.

fairly carried of her feet by the shock. You-you don't mean? And then, I'm sure tha you don't love Maurice as you used to. If you did it would be a crime.

Mrs. S.

Indeed. So you think it is a crime to love a man and be true to your lows

Mrs. W.

Mildred, I really believe you are losing your senses, why-----
Shouts are heard in the street. "Extra, extra" "Crager is convicted, Murder in the first degree."
Mrs. S. Stands petrified. The agony on her face is terrible. She goes to window, opens it, the sounds become louder.

Mrs. S.

turns to her mother. Now-now your last wish is gratified. Maruice will be out of the way. Great God. She covers her face with her hands. She sinks into chair. A pause. Lifts her head. I'll save him in spite of you in spite of himself, in spite of the whole world. He is innocent and I'll prove it.

Mrs. W.

Then why did you not prove it bef re.

Mrs. S.

Because, beacause of you and my sister and the World. I had some home that he would prove his innocence so I tried to spare you all, but now a man's life depends upon my telling the truth, and I'll tell it no matter what the cost, or who will suffer by it. Maurice did not kill Mr. Frederick. He was not there when the murder was commited. He did not spend the night in his home.

Mrs. W.

in agony: Where did he spend the night?

Mrs. S.

Here with me.

Mrs. W.

I don't believe it. You are ready to ruin us all in order to save him. A Are you not ashamed.

Mrs.

Quickly rings bell for maid.
Enter Agnes.
Where did Mr. Crager spend the night of the murder, Agnes.
Maid looks at Mistress not daring to speak.

Mrs. S.

You may tell the truth Agnes. I have made up my mind to save him at any cause.

Agnes

still in doubt: You're sure, quite sure you want meam to tell the truth?

Mrs. S.

impatiently: Yes sure, quite sure.

Agnes

turns to Mrs. W.. Mr. Crager spend the entire night here with Mrs. Slawson.

Mrs. S.

You may go now.
Exit Maid.

Mrs. W.

looks at daughter. Have you know shame?

Mrs. S.

sneeringly: Indeed, I am quite sure you know the meaning of the word. If you did you could sell your flesh and bloo d. You cannot deny that you did not sell me. You knew how I loved Maurice, but he was poor then, and you were in debt. A morgage had to be payed, and it had to be payed. My marraige was a receipt for everything. For your debts, for your morgag. For your seats at the opera, for yours and my sister entrance into society. You forced me into a marraige that was unholy, ungodly, and degrading to se self-respect. Three lives, but what are three lives. What are three ruine lives compared to wealth and society. But it seases from this moment . Leave this house at once, and I shall set Maurice free. There! All your wordly ambition is at an end.

Mrs. W.

For God's sake, Mildrd, calm yourself a little, and you will see you cannot do this treadfulthing. Stop to think what the wrold will say.

Mrs. S.

The world. For the world you sold your soul, you sold your child, and you would be willing o sell my sisters the same as you did me, but that is your world. Mine is quite a different one. I do not fear what your world will say. I have sacrificed my life for you and my sisters, and that would have continued to the end of my days. But now his life lies in the palm of my hand. Do you xpect meto let him die a murderers death?

Mrs. W.

But he would rather die than disgrace your name.

Mrs. S.

You mean that you would rather see him die than give up your present position. She draws a deep bbbbb.br eath. I tell you I'll save him. Takes wrap.

Mrs. W. runs to her

runs to her. Mildred, please, please listen to me. You are about to do a dreadful thing. You will ruin yourself and your sisters forever. Charity begins at home. Mildred, think how you will suffer to see your sisters' heads held in shame, and you will be the cause o f it.

Mrs. S.

cries: Stop, stop. There is no use. I've had my choice between fear of the world and duty Ibve chosen bravely. Nothing can turn me coward again.

Mrs. W.

Wher are you going now?

Mrs. S.

I am going to shock the world, by saving a man's life.

Curtain.